

THE UNION OF LABOUR WITH BEAUTY.

At a *soirée* in Sheffield last week, on the occasion of laying the first stone of the Athenæum and Mechanics' Institution there, of which we have already spoken, Lord Morpeth made an eloquent address, as indeed he always does. In the course of it, speaking of poetry and fiction, and with apt reference to the place in which he was, his lordship said:—Those of you who have the opportunity of consulting the old legends and classical mythology are aware, that among the fancied deities with which they people their world, one more especially was regarded as the god of labour and of handicraft, Vulcan by name, who was always represented as employed in huge smithies and workshops, hammering huge anvils, blowing huge bellows, heating vast furnaces, and begrimed with soot and dirt. Well, ladies and gentlemen, for this hard-working and swarthy-looking divinity they wished to pick out a wife. And they did not select for him a drab—not a person, taken herself from the scullery or kitchen, but they chose for him Venus, the goddess of love and beauty. Now pick out for me the moral of this tale, for I believe that nothing ever was invented,—certainly nothing by the polished and brilliant imagination of the Grecian intellect—which has not its meaning and its moral. I have no doubt that all the legends of our own country—that the one even of your own neighbourhood, the Dragon of Wantley itself,—has some appropriate allegory and meaning, if we only knew how to find them out. But what is the special meaning of the marriage of Vulcan with Venus—of the hard-working artificer with the laughter-loving queen—of labour with beauty? What is it but this, that even in a busy-bive of industry and toil like this, even here, upon a spot which is in many respects too inapt representation of the fabled workshop of Vulcan—even here, amid the clong of anvils, the roar of bellows, and the sputtering of forges—even here, amid stunning sounds and sooty blackness, the mind—untrammeled mind—may go forth—may pierce the dun atmosphere which is poised around us, may wing its way to fresh air and purer light which are beyond, and may ally itself with all that is most fair, genial, and lovely in creation. So, gentlemen, I say, your labour—your downright hard, swarthy labour may make itself the companion, the helpmate, and the husband of beauty—of physical beauty, as I have reason to believe, from the inspection which I am able even now to command. But the beauty with which I say your labour should ally itself, is intellectual beauty—the beauty which is connected with the play of fancy, with the achievements of art, and with the creation of genius,—beauty, such as painting fixes upon the glowing canvas, such as the sculptor embodies in the breathing marble, such as architecture develops in her stately and harmonious proportions, such as music clothes with the enchantments of sound. Now, it is the perception and cultivation of the beautiful in these departments that I look for in your schools of design, and your concerts; and many of the lectures which you hear from able and gifted men, may be made most agreeably subversive; and I strongly advise you, and I advise the members of this Mechanics' Institution, and I strongly advise its well-wishers and promoters, to show a discriminating and generous support of these tasteful and humanising pursuits.

FURNACE IMPROVEMENTS.—A patent has been granted to Mr. George Grundy, of Manchester, for a peculiar arrangement of furnace and flues, so as to form a continuous fireplace from end to end supplied with air from parallel air flues, thus allowing the heat to be conducted from end to end, or from end to centre repeatedly, and for a peculiar form and construction of tile or fire-clay tubes, cylinders, or retorts for generating gas, to be made in pieces strengthened with imbedded metal hoops, jointed with fire-clay, and made to extend to any length, or from end to end of the furnace, with exit-pipe at both ends for the issue of gas, and the means of removing coal tar from it, and creating a draft through it so as completely to remove the carbonaceous deposit. Four of these retorts may be mounted in one furnace.

Correspondence.

CARDIFF TOWN HALL COMPETITION.

SIR,—In the last number of *THE BUILDER* my name is mentioned in connection with this competition, in a manner which, I think, calls for some notice on my part. Amongst other observations, you state that, "having limited the competitors to the sum of 8,000*l.*, the council have awarded the first premium to me, my estimate being 11,690*l.*"

The advertisement for designs, after stating the accommodation required, ended thus,—“The means at the disposal of the committee are calculated at 8,000*l.*,” and I do not conceive that there is any thing here which renders it imperative on an architect to limit his estimate to that precise sum if, in his opinion, the accommodation indisputably required could not be provided for the money. The question is, has any building containing a town-hall, two courts of justice (of size adequate to the population of Glamorganshire), together with police court, rooms for magistrates, grand jury, clerk of the peace, court-keeper, &c. &c.,—ever been executed for 8,000*l.*, or anything like it, even where building materials are as cheap as at Cardiff?

My design was conceived on an economical scale as I deemed advisable, and I reported that which I believed a fair and honest estimate, and at which sum I should have no objection to guarantee the execution of the work. Your journal teems with letters and remarks on the,—to use the mildest term,—error of reporting false or inadequate estimates, and I certainly did not expect to see in *THE BUILDER*, which has always striven to rectify this abuse, hasty strictures on the acceptance of an apparently honest estimate. In this very same number, is an instance in point, where it is stated that the lowest tender for the Guernsey memorial was double the amount of the estimate; such an occurrence I have made it a rule to avoid to the best of my ability, and in my report accompanying the design, I candidly stated, though at the risk of losing all chance of success, that I did not think the required accommodation could be procured for 8,000*l.*; and in all probability the council may have come to the same conclusion, from the result of former experience as to the adequacy of estimates generally.

Trusting I shall be excused this vindication of myself from being the object of what your correspondent is pleased to term “a decision the most unjust,” and apologizing for taking up so much of your valuable space,

I am, Sir, &c., HORACE JONES.
16, Fairoirs'-Inn, September 6th, 1847.

•• The remarks in question contained no charge against Mr. Jones even by implication. The objection was to the proceeding of the committee, and that remains still in full force. The second premium was awarded to Mr. Christopher Eames.

GUERNSEY MEMORIAL COMPETITION.

SIR,—Your correspondent's statement relative to the Victoria Tower, Guernsey, is erroneous; permit me, therefore, to set him right, and to offer a few statements of my own by way of explanation.

1st. The lowest tender was 2,664*l.* 18*s.* 6*d.*, and not “just 3,000*l.*”

2nd. This tender was made upon drawings showing a tower of greater height than was absolutely required by the conditions of the competition.

3rd. The building will be erected for the 1,500*l.* without any derivation from the sketch selected by the committee from three or four I sent to them as a competitor.

4th. Previous to the builders' competition, I prepared the committee for an excess over the 1,500*l.*, and they have explained to me that the greatness of such excess arises from the fact that the extensive government works progressing in the neighbouring island of Jersey have tended to advance the price of both labour and materials to a very considerable extent. It is a fact, moreover, that there were only three tenders delivered.

I am, Sir, &c.,

WILLIAM B. COLLING.
London, Sept. 8, 1847.

Miscellaneous.

LECTURES ON ARCHITECTURE.—At the Collegiate Institution, Liverpool, Mr. T. L. Donaldson has delivered a course of lectures on architecture. The second, given on Friday in the week before last, related to the architecture of the Greeks. The lecturer said:—The highest styles of ancient architecture were shown to have their origin in the simplest and most primitive structures. The original type of the Grecian temple was the wooden hut (?) Architecture, in fact, comprised a complete system of relations, proportions, and laws, which had their basis in nature itself. The Doric order was a thoroughly well-conceived and highly-wrought production of the Greeks, unimproved by any subsequent efforts. It was happily and successfully carried out in some of the public buildings of Liverpool, as the chapel of the School for the Blind, and the oratory at St. James's Cemetery. The Ionic order was next described. Generally, the distinctive feature of an order was the capital, but of the Ionic order an essential part was the base. The shaft contained twenty-four channellings, and the flutes, instead of coming to a sharp edge, had a fillet between each two. The capital was marked by spiral volutes. The Doric order was invented in Greece proper; the Ionic in Asia Minor. The Corinthian order differed essentially from the others in its capital. The base was much the same. The story of its origin was interesting. Whatever dependence was to be placed upon the fact, the moral of the story was good. It shewed that if an artist wished to find any thing new, he must go to nature, and he would be sure to produce something graceful and elegant. It was not merely one part of a building that constituted character: the type must be followed out in the smallest details, otherwise there would be a harshness and irregularity for which no amount of beauty in the individual parts could make amends. In treating of Grecian temples, and particularly of the Parthenon, which was cited as a proof of what the Greek mind could do in true art, the lecturer observed, that when architecture was alone she was defective. She required the aid of painting and sculpture, and did not acquire her true majesty till all these were concentrated in one great building. Here it was that we fell short. We did not adequately embellish our buildings, consequently, they were inexpressive and passionless: they did not elevate the mind or move the imagination. In the new Houses of Parliament, however, we were likely to have a structure that would vie with the finest productions of ancient times.

THE RESCUE OF THE GREAT BRITAIN transatlantic leviathan steamer is regarded as one of the greatest triumphs on record of the engineering talent applied to the raising of a stranded ship, not even excepting the raising of the *Gorgon* steam frigate at Monte Video. Although the engineer who first undertook the task was Mr. J. Brunel, jun., who caused a peculiar breakwater to be erected seaward, to which Captain Claxton added an outward row of elastic greenwood;—by the Messrs. Bremner, father and son, of the north of Scotland, was the task of rescuing her chiefly accomplished. “Mr. Bremner,” says the *Liverpool Times*, “has been singularly successful in all his undertakings of a similar kind. He has now raised no less than 200 submerged vessels. Some time ago he succeeded in saving a cargo of Swedish iron belonging to Messrs. Jervon and Sons, of Liverpool, from on board a vessel sunk in deep water on the coast of Scotland.” Several other gentlemen are entitled to participate in the credit of the achievement.

IRISH MARBLE.—We find, says the *Morning Post*, that a vessel, just arrived in the river from the port of Galway, has brought the large quantity of 32½ tons weight of marble, the production of the county of Galway. This is the same quarter from which the arrivals of last year took place, and which was at the time spoken of as being of a very beautiful description.

DEMAND FOR LABOUR IN AUSTRALIA.—The rate of wages paid in April last, was—Blacksmiths, 30*s.* to 35*s.* weekly; carpenters, 6*s.* to 6*s.* 6*d.* per day; bricklayers, 6*s.* to 6*s.* 6*d.* per day; masons, 6*s.* to 7*s.* per day; labourers, 15*s.* to 25*s.* per week. Most of the trades, it is said, can find good employment at the prices fixed.